

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2409

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO NIGERIA: SCHEDULE

REF: LAGOS 2324

1. EMBASSY OFFICER MET ON FEBRUARY 24 WITH MEA AMERICAS DIRECTOR MUSA AND MEA PROTOCOL DEPUTY CHIEF ABDULLAHI FOR DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO NIGERIA. MUSA COMMENTED THAT FOLLOWING VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE WERE THE RESULT OF A MEETING EARLIER IN THE DAY BETWEEN THE MEA COMMITTEE PLANNING THE TRIP AND THE HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE. MUSA ADDED THAT THESE POSITIONS HAD NOT YET BEEN COMMUNICATED TO GENERAL OBASANJO, WHO IS TRAVELLING IN KWARA STATE.

2. MUSA BEGAN BY COMMENTING ON THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRIP TO BE MADE IN WASHINGTON (STATE 47139 AND 47433). HE SAID THAT FROM THE NIGERIAN STANDPOINT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE TO HAVE HAD TIME TO CLEAR THE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH THE HEAD OF STATE. GIVEN THE DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATION, THE FMG WOULD HAVE REQUESTED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT BE POSTPONED UNTIL MONDAY. HOWEVER, AS OTHER COUNTRIES WERE INVOLVED, THE FMG WOULD NOT PRESS THE POINT. THE CHIEF OF THE CIVIL SERVICE WOULD HAVE TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO GENERAL OBASANJO.

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3. ON THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE, MUSA AND ABDULLAHI HAD THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE REACTIONS.

4. THE SPEECH: MEA CONTINUES TO PREFER BAYERO UNIVERSITY IN KANO AS THE VENUE. HOWEVER, IT IS WILLING TO CONCEDE THE POINT

IF THE USG MAINTAINS STRONG PREFERENCE FOR LAGOS. IF THE SPEECH IS TO BE IN LAGOS, THE NIGERIAN SIDE WISHES IT TO BE AT EITHER THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (NIIA) OR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, WITH A PREFERENCE FOR NIIA. MEA DOES NOT THINK IT SHOULD BE HELD AT EITHER THE NATIONAL THEATRE OR AT THE STATE HOUSE MARINA. THE MEA HOPED THAT BAYERO COULD AT LEAST BE VISITED WHILE THE PRESIDENT WAS IN KANO.

5. THE DURBAR

R: MUSA SAID THE NIGERIANS WOULD BE HAPPY TO PUT ON A DURBAR FOR THE PRESIDENT IN KANO. HE SUSPECTED THAT THE EVENT MAY APPEAL TO US BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR SANU, US TELEVISION HAD LOVED THE DURBAR DURING THE 1977 FESTAC. HOWEVER, THE DURBAR CANNOT BE HELD IN THE AFTERNOON AT 1330 BECAUSE OF THE HEAT. MUSA PROPOSED THAT IT BE THE FIRST EVENT WHEN THE PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN THE MORNING. MUSA ADDED THAT A "MINI-DURBAR" WOULD TAKE TWO HOURS, BUT HE FELT A "MINI-MIMI-DURBAR" COULD BE ARRANGED WHICH WOULD LAST ONE HOUR AND STILL PROVIDE A GOOD SHOW OF RIDING AND ACROBATICS.

6. KADAWA AGRICULTURAL PROJECT: MUSA UNDERSTOOD THE LACK OF U.S. ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS EVENT BECAUSE OF TIME AND TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS. HOWEVER, THE COMMITTEE WANTED TO MAKE ANOTHER STRONG PITCH FOR IT. TRAVEL TIME BY HELICOPTER WOULD ONLY BE TWENTY MINUTES. IN ADDITION, WITH THE DURBAR IN THE MORNING, THE AFTERNOON WAS FREE. FINALLY, IT WAS A NIGERIAN DEVELOPMENTAL

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PROJECT RUN BY NIGERIANS. IT WAS ALL WELL AND GOOD TO VISIT CONSTRUCTION SITES IN LAGOS, BUT THESE WERE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS RUN BY EXPATRIATES. MUSA ASKED THAT THE ISSUE BE RECONSIDERED.

7. COMMENT: WE REPORT THE NIGERIAN VIEWS IN PARAS 1-6 WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THEY ARE THE VIEWS OF THE MEA PLANNING COMMITTEE AND HAVE NOT YET BEEN PRESENTED TO OBASANJO. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT THEY DIFFER SOMEWHAT FROM WHAT BALEWA HAS TOLD US (LAGOS 2324). HOWEVER, IT MAY FACILITATE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IF WE HAVE WASHINGTON'S REACTIONS ON THESE WHEN WE NEXT MEET WITH THE MEA PLANNING COMMITTEE.

8. THE KEY ISSUE AT PRESENT WITH REGARD TO SCHEDULE PLANNING IS WHETHER PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH SHOULD BE GIVEN AT THE BAYERO UNIVERSITY IN KANO, OR IN LAGOS. WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE INDOOR FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT BAYERO UNIVERSITY. AS SOON AS WE HAVE THIS INFORMATION FROM OUR CONSULATE IN KADUNA, WE WILL PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE SITE FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH. IN THE MEANTIME WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON TWO OTHER SCHEDULE ISSUES ON WHICH THE DEPARTMENT REQUESTED OUR VIEWS IN STATE 42622.

9. DEDICATION OF NEW EMBASSY: WE BELIEVE THIS EVENT SHOULD BE INCLUDED. THE SITE IS IMPRESSIVE, WOULD PROVIDE A GOOD MEDIA OPPORTUNITY, AND PRESENTS NO LOGISTICAL OR SECURITY PROBLEMS. THE EVENT WOULD EMPHASIZE AND PROVIDE A SPLENDID BACKGROUND FOR REMARKS ON NIGERIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IF WE HAVE A LARGE GROUP OF EMBASSY FAMILIES AS WELL AS OTHER AMERICAN RESIDENTS IN LAGOS PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY, THE EVENT COULD ALSO SERVE TO SATISFY THE DESIRE OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY HERE TO MEET THE PRESIDENT.

10. ROAD CONSTRUCTION SITE: WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A SUITABLE EVENT IN LAGOS WHICH WOULD HIGHLIGHT AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION WORK HERE. SUCH ACTIVITY IN THE LAGOS AREA IS VERY LIMITED. THE D.C. SAVAGE COMPANY OF MEMPHIS, TENN IS ERECTION BUILDINGS, BUT A MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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DYNAMIC TYPE OF ACTIVITY IN THE FORM OF PILE DRIVING AND FOUNDATION ERECTION IS BEING DONE BY RAYMOND INTERNATIONAL OF HOUSTON, TEXAS. RAYMOND OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT AT THE TIME OF THE CARTER VISIT THEIR PILE DRIVING RIG WILL BE WORKING IN MID-CHANNEL NEXT TO THE CARTER BRIDGE. RAYMOND IS HELPING TO BUILD A NEW BRIDGE ALONGSIDE THE OLD ONE, WHICH WILL THEN BE TORN DOWN. COMPANY OFFICIALS PROMISE THEIR FULL COOPERATION WITH THE NES MEDIA. WE DO NOT THINK THAT A VISIT TO THIS SITE SHOULD CONSTITUTE A MAJOR EVENT IN ITS OWN RIGHT, BUT IT WOULD BE USEFUL AND UNCOMPLICATED FOR THE PRESIDENT TO STOP HERE BRIEFLY DURING THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 1.
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